

to speak with their elected leaders. The second might have allowed for more detailed information on campaign finance reform by tracking its effect on all communities in the United States. The third would have committed this body toward fair and equal participation for all in elections. Rather than consider these proposals, the leadership has stifled considerable debate by reporting a rule designed to push their agenda through without regard to the will of the American people once again.

Mr. Speaker, the United States has reached a crucial point in its history. We could have discussed meaningful amendments that would protect the voices of all Americans. The Rules Committee should have paid attention to both the ancient and recent history of this Nation. Equal access to the right to vote has been a constant struggle within the United States, and until we take seriously the right of every citizen to participate in the political process by developing a campaign finance structure that promotes election reform for all Americans, this country will suffer.

I am disappointed. The American people will be, too. I oppose this rule.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about an issue that over 250 Members of this House have voted for twice and passed in the past. A similar bill has already passed the Senate in April. The leadership of this House promised supporters of campaign finance reform a straight up or down vote on Shays-Meehan, a bill so similar to the Senate version that a conference committee was not required, and we know that the conference committee has been the graveyard for campaign finance reform. I guess the leadership felt they could not win on the merits, so they had to manipulate the process to shortchange the American people once again.

Let us show the American people that our government is not for sale. Let us show the American people that we support elections, not auctions to the highest spender. Let us vote against this undemocratic rule. Let us bring it down so that we can bring Shays-Meehan to the floor for an up or down vote and send it to the Senate so a conference committee is not required, the President can sign it, and we can finally pass meaningful reform.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. RIVERS).

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise against this rule, and I raise my voice in support of a straight up or down vote on Shays-Meehan.

The Supreme Court of the United States has laid out very clearly for all of us the role that Congress can play in regulating elections in this country. They have told us that Congress can prohibit the use of corporate treasury funds and union dues money in Federal elections. They have told us that we may limit contributions to candidates, parties and political committees; that we may pass laws to combat actual

corruption and the appearance of corruption in the operation of the Federal Government; that we can require disclosure of the source and size of certain kinds of spending and most contributions; and that we can regulate coordinated expenditures to thwart attempts to circumvent existing election law. That is what the Supreme Court has already said.

Shays-Meehan does no more than what the Supreme Court has already endorsed, and it does no more than what is right. I urge Members to vote against this rule and support Shays-Meehan.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I rise in opposition to the rule, a rule that in effect takes Shays-Meehan and cuts it into 14 little pieces, a rule that says to the supporters of Shays-Meehan, If you are willing to vote for it once, we are going to put you to the test of voting for it 14 times.

Why is this being offered over the opposition of both Shays and Meehan? Very simply for this reason, the opposition believes they cannot defeat Shays-Meehan in an up or down vote. The only way they can defeat this legislation is if they can obfuscate; if they can make it ambiguous, unclear; if they can conceal to the American people whether they are really for it or against it.

The American people not only have the right to an up or down vote to end soft money and its corrupting influence on the political process, they have the right to the accountability that comes with a clear and unequivocal vote up or down on campaign finance reform. That is what is being denied with this rule. That is why we must reject this rule, so that the American people can have a clear and unequivocal vote for or against campaign finance reform.

I urge a "no" vote.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues, I stand in opposition to this rule. As a second-term Member of Congress, legislation was quite new to me in my first term. What I am seeing happening today is the inability of a legislator with good intention to offer a campaign finance reform bill who, after having had a chance to speak with his or her colleagues, saying, Well, maybe that's a good idea. Maybe I should suggest an amendment or a change. Yes, there are 14. There probably could be 25 amendments that would be offered by colleagues to try and make this a better bill.

I must say very truthfully, I am still torn about how we do campaign finance reform. I support campaign finance reform because I know it is good for all

the people of our country. How we get to it seems to be a difficult question. And I say to Mr. Leader and to others here on the floor, let us take some time. The Senate dedicated 2 weeks. Why do we only get 1 day?

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

This is kind of an extraordinary situation we now find ourselves in on the floor. I would like to reiterate something I said at the beginning of this debate. This is a very peculiar result. The Republican leadership has crafted such an unfair and unusual rule that it may have the exact opposite effect of what the Republican leadership intended. They are trying to defeat Shays-Meehan, but they have written such a terrible rule that they may in fact drive some of the opponents of Shays-Meehan into the Shays-Meehan camp. It is a very interesting result.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the Democratic leader.

(Mr. GEPHARDT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can still have a rule today that is fair and seen as fair by Members on both sides of the aisle. This issue is a bipartisan issue. It is an issue on which we have always had bipartisan support. What we are saying today is that a vote for the rule as it presently reads is a vote against real campaign reform. I know there is disagreement on that, but all we are really saying is that we would like and appreciate what we believe is a fair procedure. And to us that means allowing us to have a manager's amendment putting all of the changes that we want to make in our bill in order with one vote. We then are happy to face any amendments that anyone wants to, in an orderly way, make against this bill and then vote on the Ney bill and then vote, if that does not succeed, on the Shays-Meehan bill.

This is an important moment in our democracy. There are many of us who feel deeply that this system is flawed, that there is too much money involved in campaigns, that the American people have become cynical about politics and about our democracy, and we have to be able to at least have an effort to pass real, meaningful campaign reform now, today, or at the latest tomorrow or next week.

I ask the leadership in all sincerity to give us what we believed was a fair procedure, for us to be able to get our bill perfected and in front of the Congress, take any shots with any amendments that are desired and then give us a vote on Ney and a vote on Shays-Meehan.

I will just finally say again, this is a big moment for our country. A lot of people out there are watching. There are a lot of people out there, just ordinary citizens, who want there to be less special interests involved in the political process. They want the Government and the democracy returned to